



BIG SKY LIBRARIES

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MSL to Host Trustee Workshops in October

Serving on a library board is hard work. To help, Montana State Library is very excited to host two workshops in October featuring Pat Wagner, a consultant with Pattern Research in Denver.

Pat's programs emphasize the importance of understanding the spirit and letter of the law governing library boards; the necessity of building peer-based, working relationships with decision-makers in the library's community; and the need to respect boundaries among the duties of the board, the director, and the staff. These programs have been praised by both state librarians and trustees, as well as library directors around the country for their practical and eye-opening approaches to board governance.

The workshops are scheduled for October 11-12 in Great Falls at the

Heritage Inn, and for October 25-26 in Billings at the Northern Hotel. Scheduled events for Friday include a dinner with Pat Wagner as guest speaker. Saturday's events include training sessions with Pat and MSL staff on a wide variety of board topics, including: strategic planning, handling library crises, running meetings, relationships with other groups, by-laws, advocacy, finances, network building, and marketing. Time will also be available on Saturday for participants to ask questions relevant to their specific library and board.

Library directors, trustees, friends and foundation members, and government officials are welcome to attend. Registration materials are available on the MSL web site or by contacting Sue Jackson, 1-800-338-5087 or sujackson@state.mt.us.

MLN 2002 OCLC Training

A number of OCLC-related classes are offered between October 21 and December 12. Classes include use of the MLN Gateway, WorldCat, OCLC CatExpress, and the OCLC ILL Web interface. For libraries doing original cataloging on OCLC, additional classes are offered for CatME and OCLC's new Connexion cataloging tool. You can see a detailed schedule with course descriptions on the MLN's web site at: <http://montanalibraries.org/MLNOCLCtrainingfall2002.html>.

OCLC Western and the Bibliographic Center for Research (BCR) will provide training. State Library staff will teach ILL protocols and an introduction to the MLN Gateway. Training sites include Montana State University-Billings Library and the Lewis & Clark Library in Helena. We appreciate the willingness of MSU-Billings and Lewis & Clark to share their facilities; please thank them when you get a chance.

This year, our contract with OCLC did not include training, so

libraries will pay for the training they attend. Registration is completed directly with OCLC Western or BCR (all Montana libraries are BCR members and therefore qualify for member pricing). OCLC Western registration can be accomplished online at: <http://www.oclc.org/western/training/index.htm>. Registering for BCR-taught classes can be accomplished at: <http://www.bcr.org/workshop/wkshops.html>. Class sizes are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

A Message From The State Librarian



Karen Strege
State Librarian



"We hear that the State will face a revenue deficit of up to \$250 million"

Karen's Schedule

October 7 & 8 — COSLA Meeting in Boston

October 9 — Commission Meeting—MSL Conference Room

October 10 — Pathfinder Federation Meeting in Fort Benton

November 4 — Networking Task Force Meeting — MSL Conference Room

December 5 — MGIC Meeting

December 11 — Commission Meeting — MSL Conference Room

A few short weeks ago, the Legislature met to balance this year's State budget, which had a shortfall of approximately \$45 million. Every State agency had its budget reduced. Here is how the State Library's budget fared.

The MSL uses Coal Severance Tax (CST) revenues to fund federation operations, purchase the InfoTrac Product, and to purchase materials for state-wide services. The Legislature cut 25% or \$70,000 of our CST appropriation. The Commission subsequently reduced funds to federations by \$27,217 and reduced the State Library's material budget by \$42,783.

The Legislature made the following reductions in the General Fund revenues received by the MSL: A 1% reduction in overall General Funds; a 25% reduction in the revenue for office supplies; a 20% reduction in general funds to pay for staff salary increases. Legislators also approved a 25% reduction in the equipment budget for State agencies. Books and other library materials are considered "equipment" under the State accounting system. This proposal would have eliminated the State Library's book budget. However, the MSL, along with the State Law Library, was made exempt from the cut during the last minutes of the session.

The grand total of these reductions, plus the reductions already ordered by the Governor, is \$179,065 or approximately 10% of our State budget. The Library Commission met on September 3 and made the necessary reductions in our budget. Unfortunately, a lack of funds in the personnel budget forced the Commission to implement a reduc-

tion in force (RIF) plan that affected one employee. The employee holding the position of Clerical Services Assistant in our Library and Information Services Department was released from employment on September 20. The Commission will make up the balance of the deficit in personnel services by leaving two positions open in the agency — the Data Coordinator in the Library Development Department and one position in the Natural Resources Information System. Managers have re-assigned duties from these vacant positions to other staff members.

In only a few short months, the Legislature will again convene to set the 2004-05 budget. We hear that the State will face a revenue deficit of up to \$250 million. The MSL has submitted its 04-05 budget to the Governor, whose office is working on the executive's budget proposal in September. We will work with the Governor's office in October to further develop the MSL's request. Then, in January, the Legislature will consider the Governor's proposals in light of the available, or perhaps new, revenues.

Unless revenues increase dramatically in the next few months, legislators will be making exceptionally difficult choices among important State programs and services. Our programs, including State aid to public libraries, federation programs, the interlibrary loan reimbursement program, and the purchase of the InfoTrac product, will be scrutinized. During the upcoming months, we will let you know the status of State Library programs throughout this process.

Commissioners' News— by Ralph Atchley, MSL Commissioner

I recently had the difficult task of taking part in a Commissioners' meeting wherein we were forced to take action on a Reduction In Force (RIF) issue within the Montana State Library. It is no news that the MSL must reduce its budget and cut expenses. Unfortunately, this involves a reduction in personnel.

I know times are tough. The staff at the MSL are making a Samson-like effort to keep the pillars from collapsing on the State Library. In fact, county, school, and community librarians across the land are working hard to fend off angry calls to close their doors. Just as Eratosthenes stood at the doors of the great library at Alexandria, we too must stand vigilant guard at our own doors to bar the burn-

ing torches. We, however, can do a little better job than Eratosthenes did!

Libraries are a foundation of civilized society. We provide no greater function than to act as a repository of man's knowledge. But that function is crucial to defining community and self. Libraries hold the essence of our dreams, aspirations, and history. Closing a library reduces by ever so little bit, the ego of our community. Montana needs its libraries, and we need the people who run them.

Once, a group of knights established a round table on which the principals of an improved society were laid. The reading tables of Montana libraries serve the same purpose today. Community closeness begins in your library.

Doubt me? Look into the little faces filled with wonder at your next story time session.

You are hereby charged: Don your reading glasses and gird yourselves with the armor of poets, philosophers, and the basic reference section how-to authors. We must move ahead as a well-organized, thoughtful group to inform our friends of the importance of libraries in each Montana community.

Your cause is noble, your direction true. The forces of cutbacks, closures, and RIFS must be stopped. Together we will draw a line through the non-fiction section and stand against further harm to our libraries, our services, and most importantly, our people.



Ralph Atchley,
MSL Commission



*"Your
cause is
noble, your
direction
true."*

Gates Foundation to Send Software Upgrades to Grantees

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation included one software upgrade as part of its U.S. Library State Partnership Program grants. Montana libraries that received such grants will receive their upgrades in October.

The Software Upgrade Package for computers and servers includes a set of CD-ROMs, installation instructions, software licenses,

updated publications, and 90 days unlimited technical support. English software titles include:

- ♦ **Microsoft Encarta 2001 Reference Suite:** Encyclopedia Deluxe, Africana Third Edition, Interactive World Atlas, Researcher, and World English Dictionary
- ♦ **Microsoft Streets & Trips 2001**
- ♦ **Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5**

Libraries with a Gates Library Spanish Computer will also receive these Spanish titles:

- ♦ **Microsoft Encarta 2001:** Spanish: Enciclopedia and Atlas mundial
- ♦ **Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 Spanish**

Libraries are encouraged to install this new software quickly, in order to take full advantage of the 90 days of technical support.

NRIS Offers a Variety of New Data, Services



The Montana Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) has added a host of new data, reports, and data services to our web site.

We invite you, and your patrons, to visit the links that accompany this article.



NRIS has continued to acquire and make available new data and data services. For example, we now hold aerial photography files for about 93% of the state. We've developed and implemented a 24k soils data web site in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. In addition, we've added a website for the new medium-resolution National Hydrography Dataset in cooperation with the United

States Geological Survey.

We've also updated and revamped our national elevation dataset, created a new interactive water rights access system in cooperation with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and updated and improved the impaired water quality data access system in cooperation with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. NRIS also rolled out the new Montana Fisheries Information System in cooperation with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The Montana Natural Heritage program, which is a part of NRIS, has produced a number of new reports this year to document biological resources within Montana.

We've also renovated the Heritage web site to highlight reports, stewardship maps, and new ecological information. Heritage has partnered with Montana Audubon to develop the Montana Bird Distribution database and with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to create a new website called 'Montana Wetlands Legacy.'

Finally, NRIS developed and implemented an integrated Internet-based request tracking system to record and track data requests for all the programs at NRIS. This system allows users to input requests, track the status on ongoing requests, and make comments or changes while a request is in process.

For more information, please call us at (406) 444-5354. We'll be glad to help!

Dataset with Web Addresses:

Natural Heritage Program Reports: <http://nhp.nris.state.mt.us/reports.htm>
 Bird Distribution: <http://nhp.nris.state.mt.us/mbd/>
 MT Wetlands Legacy: <http://www.wetlandslegacy.org/>
 USGS Aerial Photos: <http://nris.state.mt.us/nsdi/doq.asp>
 NRCS 24K Soils: <http://nris.state.mt.us/nrcs/soils/>
 National Hydrography Dataset (NHD): <http://nris.state.mt.us/nsdi/nhd/>

National Elevation Dataset: <http://nris.state.mt.us/nsdi/nris/el10/dems.html>

DNRC Water Rights: <http://nris.state.mt.us/apps/dnrc/waterrightmain.asp>

DEQ Water Quality: <http://nris.state.mt.us/wis/enviromet/>

FWP MT Fisheries Information System: <http://nris.state.mt.us/scripts/esrimap.dll?name=MFI SH&Cmd=INST>

NRIS Request Tracker: <http://nris.state.mt.us/reqapp/userMain.htm>

MSL to Participate in National Book Festival

MSL has accepted an exciting opportunity to participate in the Second National Book Festival, which is set for October 12 in Washington, DC.

The National Book Festival, inspired and hosted by First Lady Laura Bush, is organized and sponsored by the Library of Congress. The Festival is meant to celebrate and create public interest in reading, literacy, and libraries. The first event, which was held last September, drew a crowd of 25,000 – 30,000 people; more are expected this year.

Bette Ammon of the Missoula Public Library will be our representative at MSL's "Pavillion of the States" exhibit. A COSLA grant will enable Bette to attend. During the Festival, Bette will distribute information about Montana's libraries as well as state literary and author events.

For more information, visit the National Book Festival's website at: www.loc.gov. C-SPAN 2's Book TV will provide live coverage of the event all day.

TBL Recording Program in NLS Quality Assurance Review

The Montana Talking Book Library's (TBL) recording program has submitted its first magazine recording to the National Library Services' Quality Assurance Review Program. This informal evaluation reviews locally produced audio books or magazines and judges the recording's format, announcements, production quality, narra-tion,

monitoring, and synopsis.

This program is designed to foster the availability of locally produced recordings to TBL patrons in other states. Once the review is complete, the recording is scheduled for a final inspection. If approved, the recording will be available to other Network libraries.

Montana's TBL chose the Spring 2001 issue of

"Montana, the Magazine of Western History" to submit for evaluation. TBL Supervisor Christie Briggs said, "Considering this is our first review, we are delighted that our recording was judged to have 'excellent potential.' Many Network libraries have submitted over 100 productions before gaining this type of evaluation."



Montana Librarians and Trustees Go to Idaho

A hearty group of Montana public librarians and trustees traveled west in early September to visit three library districts in Idaho. The tour included stops in Pinehurst, Hayden, and Spirit Lake to learn about the Kootenai-Shoshone Area Libraries District; in Priest River to visit the West Bonner Library District; and in Sandpoint and Clark Fork to meet with the East Bonner County Free Library District staff. These districts range in size from a single library to those with as many as seven branches.

Because Montana now has legislation in place that allows library districts to be formed, the group was interested in learning first-hand how this structure might serve their own communities. By touring

library facilities and meeting with staff, they learned details about the creation, organization, funding, cooperative services, resource sharing, staffing, and Board elections that make library districts unique from other systems. Every Idaho librarian visited expressed satisfaction at being part of a district and explained how it had improved library services for their patrons. Even the smallest libraries were able to maintain a local identity after becoming part of a larger district organization.

The group logged nearly 500 miles in the two day adventure. Rose Bridenstine, Chair of the Interim Lake County Library Board said of the trip was, "a lot of fun." She added, "It also gave me some great ideas and chances

to network with others in the group. In all, it was invaluable to me, a non-librarian, to get to share with librarians and ask questions of people already involved in district libraries."



The tour was funded by Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funds administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Montana State Library Commission.



Big Sky Libraries

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Karen Strege, State Librarian

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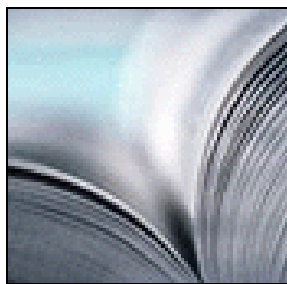
WE'RE ON THE WEB!
<http://msl.state.mt.us>

Montana Shared Catalog Goes Live

Seventeen western Montana libraries have launched their new online library catalog, called the Montana Shared Catalog. The Library's new catalog is a product of the Sirsi Corporation; they call it "iBistro". The new catalog's familiar "Amazon.com-like" look and feel helps library users easily search their library's catalog, look through other libraries' catalogs (from Montana and around the world), visit select web sites, and read book reviews...all from one easy-to-use search screen.

The Montana Shared Catalog provides access to over 400,000

books, tapes, and magazines in one academic, one school/public, and fifteen public libraries. These libraries are located in the western part of the state, stretching from



Thompson Falls to Helena to Dillon. Plans to add libraries from eastern Montana are scheduled for next year.

This catalog is available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, in the Library, or from home, work, or school. All you need to

use your library's catalog is a web browser and an Internet connection. Browse the catalog by going to: <http://montanalibraries.org>, and select a library from the drop-down "Montana Shared Catalog" dialog box.

The Montana Shared Catalog is a project of the Montana Library Network, which is a component of the Montana State Library. The Catalog is partially funded by federal Library Service and Technology Act funds.

For more information, contact Sara McHugh at (406) 444-3004.